

By the President—A Proclamation

The season is nigh when, according to the time-hallowed custom of our people, the President appoints a day as the especial occasion for praise and thanksgiving to God. This Thanksgiving finds the people still bowed with sorrow for the death of a great and good President. We mourn President McKinley because we so loved and honored him; and the manner of his death should awaken in the breasts of our people a keen anxiety for the country, and at the same time a resolute purpose not to be driven by any calamity from the path of strong, orderly, popular liberty, which, as a nation, we have thus far safely trod.

Yet, in spite of this great disaster, it is nevertheless true that no people on earth have such abundant cause for thanksgiving as we have. The past year, in particular, has been one of peace and plenty. We have prospered in things material, and have been able to work for our own uplifting in things intellectual and spiritual. Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds. We can best prove our thankfulness to the Almighty by the way in which on this earth and at this time each of us does his duty to his fellow-men.

Now, therefore, I, Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, do hereby designate as a day of general thanksgiving Thursday, the 28th of this present November, and do recommend that thru-out the land the people cease from their wonted occupations, and at their several homes and places of worship reverently thank the Giver of all good for the countless blessings of our national life.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the city of Washington this second day of November, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and One and of the Independence of the United States the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth.

By the President:

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

JOHN HAY, Secretary of State.

Thanksgiving

To set in order many reasons for thanksgiving to God for mercies either personal or national is like making an argument in favor of eating one's dinner, leaving out the paramount argument of hunger. If you are hungry, no other argument is needed, and if you are not hungry, no amount of argument will supply the deficiency. Thanksgiving is supposed to be the expression of a feeling or sentiment of the heart which we call gratitude, and this sentiment depends more upon the state of the heart than upon external circumstances. There are two people equally blessed. One is conscious of it in the form of gratitude, the other is not. The one needs no argument for thanksgiving, the other in all probability will be impervious to arguments. The first is sensible of his dependence upon God for everything, sensible that he does not deserve as much as he receives, and is correspondingly grateful and thankful, not once a year only, but every day and all the time. The enumeration of his blessings increases the fervency of his gratitude, but the root of the matter was in him before, and its fruit is the sincere thanksgiving which breaks from his lips in the form of words, in songs of praise, winging upward to the Father of Mercies the aspiration of a soul made beautiful by grace, and responsive to the great Father Love which broods over the world.

What is more beautiful than the gratitude of a child? We enhance our conception of this lovely trait by comparison with its opposite,—that hideous thing, that most repugnant and reprehensible and monstrous deformity,—the ingratitude of a child to parents who have done all for it. Sometimes the spectacle of this ingratitude, brazen, insensible, coarse and repulsive in its brutality, smites us like an accursed vision. But, as lovely as this is hideous, shines the sweet vision of gentle and thoughtful gratitude in a child, solacing like the touch of heavenly balm the cares and toils and anxieties of father and mother, who have spent themselves for the welfare of that child. This thoughtful-

ness of love is all the reward they ask for inestimable services which money could not buy, because there is not enough money in the world to represent their value. Precisely the same is our relation to our Heavenly Father, who has done for us and is doing for us what is of more worth than all the treasures of Egypt, and to whom we can make no return but that of love, and gratitude, and reverent thanksgiving. That is all the pay he asks. Love is the reward of love. For no other it seeks. But love, both in its essence and its sequence, is the ALL. Beside it there is no gift, for the all good, the all sacrifice, the all service, follows the all love. Thus has the Father proved to the world a thousand times along down the whole course of human history, and thus are we brought face to face with the vast obligation, the endless debt to him who loves us with such an infinite and patient love, a debt which the more we pay the more we owe, and yet is not a burden but an infinite delight, the soul's inner refuge of rest and repose, secure from the turbulent billowing of external cares.

If we pause to enumerate the special reasons for this national Thanksgiving, we will have to give large space to the many evidences of astonishing and unprecedented material prosperity abounding on every hand, blessings of the field so vast that there is not room to contain them. Factory and furnace and mine and mill give labor and living to the millions of skilled artisans. Everywhere there is a song of plenty and content; and the blessing fails not for that there are so many who do not remember, and do not look up, because the greatness of our God is manifest in this, that "He is kind to the unthankful and the evil." How can we grieve such a Father as this, by forgetting his benefits?

And how can we be content with the cheap payment of verbal thanks, unaccompanied with that sacrifice of love which costs us something, the returning to him of a portion of his own bounty, that his love may, by our means be more and more shed abroad in the world, and in the hearts of the children of men. What cause of Christ is there within your